

# Hillandale



Journal of the  
City of London  
Phonograph and  
Gramophone Society

THE HILLANDALE NEWS

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"... Well, John, now that I can dictate into this new-fangled machine instead of to a lady secretary, have you heard the one about the chorus-girl who..."



Intermediate Monarch - See article on Page 77



# THE HILLANDALE NEWS

Official Journal of the City of London Phonograph & Gramophone Society  
(founded 1919)

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## In This Issue

THE 10" BERLINER RECORDS, by Ruth Edge and Leonard Petts	Page 60
LONDON MEETING, May 27th	63
1986 ARSC CONFERENCE by Joe Pengelly	63
NFGS MUSICAL CONVENTION 1986 by Colin Johnson	65
POINTS & QUERIES	67, 82
AN EPIC RESTORATION by Harry Evans	70
THE RECORDS OF THE CACOPHONE COMPANY by George Taylor	72
RECORD AND BOOK REVIEWS	74
WHICH MONARCH? by Christopher Proudfoot	77
OBITUARY - SIR PETER PEARLS by John Cavanagh	81
TWISTED HORNS by L.Miles Mallinson	81

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# The 10'' Berliner Records

*by Ruth Edge and Leonard Petts*

Nobody will ever know for sure how many of the 10-inch Gramophone Concert records which the Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd issued in 1901, first appeared as Berliners, that is to say, with the title details in raised letters in the centre of the disc instead of being printed on a paper label.

Even the EMI Archives is not a reliable guide, since it contains records which carry the first type of G. & T. paper label, other copies of which are known to exist as 10-inch Berliners in private collections. Clearly, any records which were pressed before (roughly) the middle of July 1901 could not have had paper labels, since the design was not finalised until then. Further, the numbering with a GC prefix was not settled until the first week of September, an after that the labels still had to be printed. The new Concert records were being manufactured in bulk in Hanover by September 23rd, but it seems doubtful if any reached the market by that time. It is presumed that all of these would have been pressed with paper labels.

We have spent some time examining the original test pressings and first commercial pressings of the 1901 10-inch G. & T. records in the EMI archives. Despite this study, and the expert advice of John Harris, manager of EMI's matrix department, we have not been able to arrive at any single, complete and watertight explanation of the 10-inch Berliner/G. & T. mystery.

Since the title details on these 10-inch Berliners appear in raised letters on the finished black record they could not have been pressed into the original wax, or they would have appeared indented in the finished record. The lettering must have been stamped into the negative metal. However, there is uncertainty as to whether a multi-metal system was in use by the Company as early as 1901. Paperwork of the time in the EMI archives suggests that it was not used before mid-1902. This would mean that the stamper for the records must have been metal grown from the wax recording. In some cases it may have been possible to grow a number of metals from one wax. In others it is known that the wax was damaged after obtaining only one metal. Either way, once these metals were used up that was the end of that particular recording.

The first solution offered proposes that many, if not all, of the 10-inch G. & T.s recorded up to the middle of July 1901 were originally prepared as Berliners, the embossed Berliner label being stamped into the negative metal with the aid of a reversed-letter die. This negative stamper would have had to be modified once the decision to use paper labels was finalised. The inability to make an endless series of metal stampers probably led to the introduction of a copy matrix system which is known to have been in use at that time. It called for an extra-thick black record which was known as a black rubber record, and which was pressed from the existing metal. This black rubber record was then coated with graphite and a new shell grown on to it. It would have been quite



possible, before growing the copy metal, carefully to buff the centre of the black rubber record, and so remove the raised title information, leaving a normal plain flat centre. The record pressed from the new copy metal would then appear as a first version G. & T. paper label issue. This method of producing copy matrices from a black rubber record was used for a number of years: later copies carried the letters CO in the margin. All records pressed from such metals give much poorer reproduction and much greater surface noise than records pressed from the original metal.

The second solution presupposes that from the beginning of the recording of 10-inch G. & T.s in March 1901, the centre of the wax was left blank apart from the scratched-in matrix number. It also presupposes that a multi-metal system was in use at that time; that the master negative metal was grown from the wax, and from this a master positive metal made, which in turn would be used to produce a whole series of negative stamper metals from which the black finished records would be pressed. At first, these negative stamper metals would have had the label information tapped into the metal with reversed-letter dies, so producing the 10-inch Berliner record. Then, when it was decided to convert to a paper label, a new negative stamper would be made from the master positive metal. This, of course, would have no Berliner lettering, and thus could be used to press a normal plain-covered paper-label record.

Examination of several hundred 1901 G. & T. records held in the EMI archive has shown the scratched-in matrix number still intact under the paper label. Had there been any buffing away of the Berliner lettering, surely these faint scratches would have been buffed away too. Only one record was found which showed definite signs of a buffed centre, and this also included the scratched-in matrix number. As a consequence we are inclined to disregard the evidence of the paperwork, that the multi-metal system was not in use in 1901, and favour the second solution as being the most likely one.

However they may have been produced, it is certain that at least a handful of these 10-inch Berliner records leaked out on to the market. The Gramophone Company being careful, not to say parsimonious over monetary affairs, would probably have released a small number of 10-inch records already pressed as Berliners before replacing them with a smarter paper label. We have actually seen and handled seventeen different titles pressed as 10-inch Berliners, and have reports of a number of other titles produced in this form.

*(This article is an extract from the talk given by Leonard Petts at the Bloomsbury Institute on 25th February 1986. It deals with just one of the many interesting subjects which were covered and it is hoped that further extracts, dealing with other aspects of the development of the 10-inch Gramophone Record, might appear in future editions of The Hillandale News.)*

The illustration opposite is taken from a 1903-4 catalogue issued by Waterfield and Clifford of London. It is curious that the name 'Puck', by which we know machines of this type, hardly ever appears in contemporary literature. It is also surprising that an aluminium horn cost 3/6d extra.



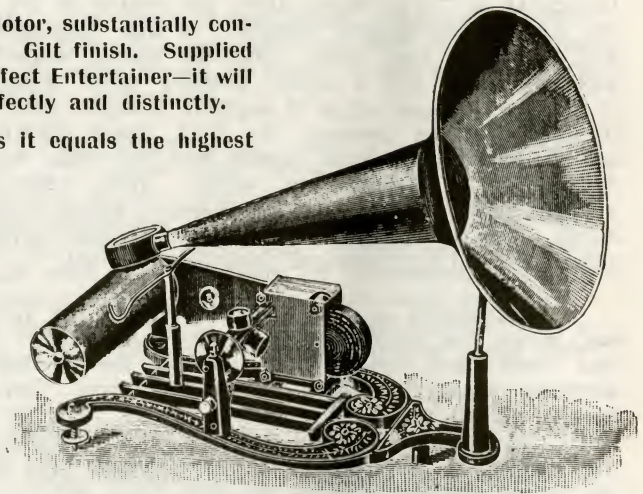
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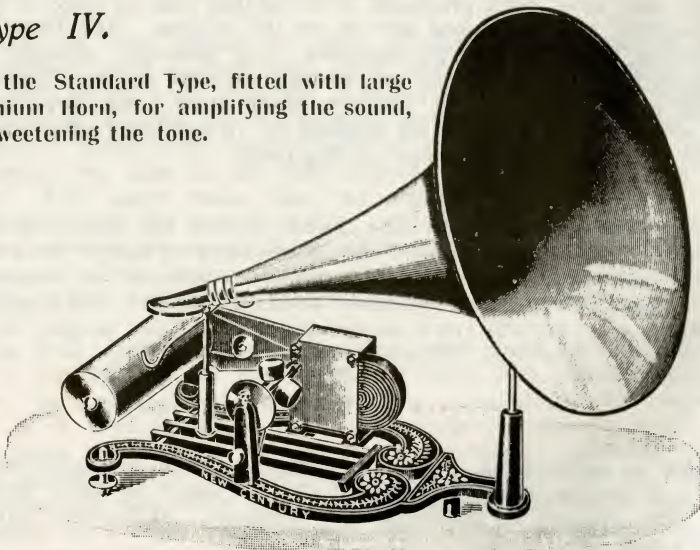
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## LONDON MEETING

27th May 1986

This was a welcome appearance by Christopher Proudfoot, who presented an entertaining recital of operatic cylinder records played on two fine machines. One was an Edison Idelia Model D, which was due to be sold at Christie's South Kensington the following week. The other was Christopher's own sawn-off Amberola III, the height of which had been modified by a previous owner by the expedient of removing some 12 inches from its legs. Whether he was a person of restricted loftiness, or whether he merely wished to operate the machine from the comfort of his easy chair or hammock we shall never know. Fortunately it was of no consequence: the emergent sound suffered no impediment from being one foot nearer the ground.

Christopher offered us a selection of good and clear records of very fine singers, including Carlo Albani ("Cielo e mar" from La Gioconda), Agostinelli ("Addio del passato" from La Traviata), Florencio Constantino ("Celeste Aida"), and many others. Many were from the 28,000 Blue Amberol series, and the series was introduced by the Andante Cantabile from Tchaikovsky's Opus 11 String Quartet, played by the Hoffman Quartet. As light relief we heard Billy Murray and friends singing Irving Berlin's version of the Sextet from Lucia di Lammermoor.

The programme was notable for the degree of audience participation it generated. Much animated discussion was aroused among the listeners by Christopher's careful commentary. There was curiosity regarding the identity of the unknown bass, Signor Rossi (on an Edison two-minute wax). Blanche Arral's spirited rendering of the Polonaise from Mignon, and Selma Kurz's record of "Una voce poco fa", both of which were originally recorded as wax Amberols, sparked off a lively debate on their merits as compared with the 'Damberols', transferred from Edison Diamond Discs. One of these same Damberols, by Julia Heinrich ("Madre, pietosa vergine" from La Forza del Destino) gave rise to concern regarding the incidence of fatalities among singers engaging in Edison Tone Tests, particularly when suffered in the vicinity of railway stations. Other topics entered into with vigour included the tendency of Blue Amberols to distort eccentrically with age and the possibility of corrective measures; and similarities between the plot of Massenet's opera Thais and that of Somerset Maugham's story "Rain".

In content, presentation and enthusiasm of its reception, this seemed to me to be an example of what a meeting of our Society should be.

A.O. LEON-HALL

## 1986 ARSC CONFERENCE

The 20th annual Conference for Recorded Sound Collections met in the Bruno Walter Auditorium at the Lincoln Centre, New York, from April 16th to 19th.

As usual this was a happy bringing together of professionals in the field with

representatives from the Library of Congress, the Rodgers & Hammerstein Archives, the Austrian and French State Archives and our own British National Sound Archive, together with Keith Hardwick of EMI. To these were added the hundred or so enthusiasts who have devoted a lifetime's study of some particular aspect of records and recordings and whose painstaking research is done without thought to time or effort.

The opening address was made by Andrew Porter, the distinguished music critic of The New Yorker magazine, who enlarged on the theme of the Conference that "Recordings are cultural artefacts and are as significant culturally, historically and intellectually as books - as well as being entertaining".

One of the several highlights of the conference was the appearance of Anna Moffo, Rise Stevens and Robert Merrill, who discussed the difficulties not only of recording worldwide - but also the problems of meeting the wishes of some conductors whether in live or recorded performance. No names, no pack drill.

A visit to the Edison Historical Site in West Orange under its dynamic Supervisory Curator, Dr. Edward Pershey, was rewarding in two ways. Not only was an Edison Kinetophone film of 1913 shown, but it was projected with lip-sync sound, predating other such films by at least a decade. To top everything, those present were given a compact disc featuring Edison material - surely an accolade the "Old Man" would have approved of - or would he?

A most enjoyable evening visit, again with abundant hospitality, was provided by the Museum of Broadcasting on 53rd. Street. Here, under ideal listening conditions, were heard not only the greats of the golden age of American radio like Jack Benny, Rudee Vallee and Fred Allen, but the failed first broadcasts of those later to become famous: Bob Hope who only made an impression on the sound engineers by kicking the microphone.

Of particular delight, back at the Lincoln Centre, was the appearance of composers from Tin-Pan Alley - not from the present generation - but those who gave us the enduring standards of the pre-pop era. These musical and word tune-smiths, in spite of admitting to a worldly wise and hardbitten approach to their work, displayed a warmth and humanity that completely won over their audience.

George Brock Nannstead (from Denmark, but his English would put many a Briton to shame) gave a particularly well-informed piece on the working agreement between the Victor Talking Machine Co. and the G. & T./Gramophone Co. between 1904 and 1929. His research confirming Victor's recording at 76 r.p.m. in opposition to HMV's 78 (thought by many present to be the case) was particularly well received.

On a personal note, this reviewer was especially interested to learn that laser beam replay of archive material is not the success it was hoped for, and was admitted as being of poorer quality than can be achieved by other methods. Again on a personal note, Barton Wimble and Daniel Hladik's presentation of "A Hi-Tech Capsule History of Recorded Sound" revealed Tamagno as never before. This was the voice of the singer the books talk about but not previously heard in my audio experience.

Two of the doyens of the discographical world were present, Richard Darrell and Julian Morton Moses, whose reminiscences encompassed not merely discographical detail but such gems as performers denying they had ever recorded material until



it was played back to them and those greats of the recording world who were not above complaining to individual record stores that their recordings were not on window display.

Sound recordings were made of all the sessions and some were videotaped. Next year the ARSC meets in Washington to celebrate its 21st Anniversary.

Joe Pengelly

*Joe Pengelly was too modest to mention his own part in the ARSC conference (he was due to speak on the subject of Lioret recordings), but to redress the balance, albeit vicariously, here is a report from the horse's mouth of a conference 'back home' ....*



National Federation  
of Gramophone Societies

## Musical Convention 1986

8 p.m. **Getting needled, or Something barraud,**  
to **something blue**

10.15 p.m. **Colin Johnson**, City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society, explores the early days of vocal art with vintage machines and recordings

It is perhaps fortunate that the provisions of the Trade Descriptions Act do not apply to the groups affiliated to the National Federation of Gramophone Societies; because I fear that some of the people who belong to 'Gramophone Societies' wouldn't know a spring barrel from a stylus-bar! These days it appears that newly-founded groups, and even some old-established organisations, have adopted the title 'Recorded Music Society', which accurately sums up their role.

So, I was pleased, even flattered, to be invited to be the first-ever speaker from the C.L.P.G.S. to address an N.F.G.S. annual musical convention. (Our esteemed President has spoken at the N.F.G.S., but in his capacity as a member of his local gramophone society, not the C.L.P.G.S.)

I was even more flattered when I discovered that not only was I winding up the weekend's events, but that it was the Federation's golden anniversary and the final convention (after 47 years) to be held at the High Leigh conference centre at Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire. My pleasure was complete when I discovered that I had been preceded as a speaker at a pre-war convention by Fred Gaisberg.

My invitation to address the convention came from a committee member of the National Federation, Michael Smith, who is well known to members of our Society as the compiler or co-compiler of some of the Oakwood Press "Voices of the Past" series, and he does know his gooseneck from his horn-elbow. I accepted his suggestion of adapting a couple of talks I had given to his local gramophone society at Gillingham in Kent. So the first part of my talk was occupied with a series of records working up from a solo recording to a multi-voice ensemble.

For the solo I chose the gramophone's first cumulative million-seller, Caruso's "Vesti la Giubba" on DB111. The duet was the HMV red label version of "E il soll dell' anima" by Jussi Bjorling and Hjordis Schymberg. The trio was the English version of the famous Faust scene with Webster Booth, Joan Cross and Norman Walker. Instead of taking the easy option of the quartet from Rigoletto, I chose the Brindisi from La Traviata with Gentile, Granda, Nessi and Barracchi on an early electric Columbia. This was followed by the quintet from Die Meistersinger with Elisabeth Schumann and Lauritz Melchior. The orchestra on this HMV black label was conducted by a young John Barbirolli. The record was chosen long before I was sent a programme for the week's events which revealed that I was preceded at the speaker's rostrum that Sunday evening by the distinguished oboist Evelyn Rothwell, perhaps better known as Lady Barbirolli....

My collection is a bit short on sextets so it had to be Lucia, with the all-star cast of Galli-Curci, Homer, Gigli, Pinza, de Luca and Bada on HMV DQ 102, from 1927. I am also short of septets, so somewhat shamefacedly I included "Dig-a-dig" and "Heigh-Ho" from Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Imagine my amazement when the 180 or so delegates started singing along! For the next record I chose the J.H.Squire Celeste Octet with "Love's Old Sweet Song". Although this is an instrumental version, the audience was not daunted and soon the strains of "just a song at twilight" were floating through the inky blackness and torrential rain outside the lecture hall.

I then decided to jump to two dozen performers and gave the delegates the 24 boys and men of the Temple Church Choir with "I waited for the Lord", with Lough and Mallett as soloists. The last record in Part One was one of those early electric, let's-see-how-many-voices-we-can-record Columbia discs. It was three thousand voices, accompanied by the Leicester Symphony Orchestra and recorded in the De Montfort Hall in Leicester. It turned out to be a wise choice: the whole front row of the audience represented the Leicester gramophone society.

After the interval I again used a mathematical progression, this time reducing the size of the records. Having apologised for having neither a 20-inch Pathe disc nor a 16-inch Vitaphone, I started with a nearly-fourteen-inch Pathe of Tosti's Venetian Song with Carrie Herwin and Leonora Sparkes. I have no 13-inch discs (were any ever made?), so the next stop was at 12 inches with the first single recording to sell a million: Alma Gluck's "Carry me back to Ol' Virginny". Eleven inches was represented by a 10½-inch Odeon of Emmy Destinn singing Leonora's aria from Il Trovatore. I chose an early 10-inch G. & T. of the Coldstream Guards for the next category and then played a 9½-inch Pathe before regaling the delegates with a 9-inch Broadcast of G.H.Elliott singing "Lily of Laguna", which gave rise to more community singing from what I am assured are usually the sedate ranks of the N.F.G.S. Eight inches gave us a Broadcast of Billy Merson singing "The Photo of the Girl I Left Behind Me". The next step to 7 inches was with a black and gold label Climax "He calls me his own Grace Darling". Six inches was provided by a Broadcast Junior and five inches by one of the tiny Bell discs from the early twenties. I had to admit defeat at four inches, but to demonstrate how this recording business started, finally I played a Blue Amberol - diameter around 2 inches!

Where possible I played my recordings on appropriate or contemporary machines. I used an open horn gramophone of the Lindstrom type; a table grand Pathephone; an Edison Fireside; an HMV 101 and 130; a Columbia Cadet and an early 1950s HMV electric record player. Amplification where necessary came from the lecture hall's



public address system, supplied by a lapel microphone which I clipped to strategic points on the various machines. These, incidentally, proved to be a tremendous draw before the lecture, during the interval and afterwards as I attempted to pack away my precious cargo.

The use of seven machines entailed a lot of running up and down, winding and needle-changing and I was indebted to one of the senior statesmen of the C.L.P.G.S., Gordon Bromly, who was at the convention and volunteered his services as a general factotum. He ensured the smooth running of what resembled an antique discotheque.

In fact, on reflection the lecture showed how much I owe to fellow members of the C.L.P.G.S. The very title "Something Barraud, Something Blue" was stolen from a couple of Ted Cunningham's cartoons. But Christopher Proudfoot I can thank for finding me an appropriate soundbox for one of my machines, also for invaluable information in his book and in Hillandale. George Frow was the previous owner of a couple of the machines I used; Len Watts was the supplier of my Pathe discs; Timothy Massey supplied several of the lateral cut discs and Frank Andrews was the source of my background information on several recordings.

I hope that to a small extent I have realised the hopes of our Chairman, who in his talk to us at Bloomsbury in April enjoined us to use our collections for the benefit of the community and that by so doing I have repaid some of my debt to my fellow members.

As a postscript to my lecture I bemoaned the fact that the lower size limit of my disc collection was five inches. Just before I left Hoddesdon that evening, a member of the Orpington Society presented me with one of those little 3½-inch Imperials, "to add to your collection" he said. And so I did, and it now becomes my smallest record by far ... that is, of course, until someone presents me with a Queen Mary's Doll's House record...!

Colin Johnson

## POINTS & QUERIES

Northwood, Middlesex, June 28th 1986

Dear Mr. Proudfoot,

In response to your Editorial in No. 149, I am writing in the hope that some reader or readers may be able to throw light on a subject regarding which I have felt curious for some time, namely, the technical means employed by the Homophone company to issue recordings of the same musical performances in two or more different formats. Examples can be found on pages 33, 36, 119, 220, 228, 229, 246, 248, 274, 320, 321, 420 and 421 of Rust and Walker's 'British Dance-Bands 1919-1939'. Items were issued both on normal Sterno records and on the 4-in-1 label which, by means of lighter and more closely spaced cutting, accommodated two titles on a single side; clearly, the two types of record were physically different, and it was not simply a matter of the same records being pressed with different labels. In some instances (pp. 214, 248, 249, 250 and 278) the 'normal' ten-inch recordings are listed as appearing also in an eight-inch format, on the Solex and Plaza labels.

Two possible explanations occur to me: firstly, two or more recording machines may have been connected in parallel to the studio output, to produce separate waxes for the production of the different format records: or, secondly, secondary recordings may have been copied (or 'dubbed') from a primary one, which would presumably be that cut to the standard ten-inch format. Can any reader confirm the correctness of either of these guesses, or give the true explanation if neither of them is correct? If 'dubbing' was involved, what pickup was used, and were special pressings in soft material made of primary recordings, to minimise surface noise? Any such details would be welcome.

To conclude, may I make a plea for more concentration on technical points such as this in Hillandale? Lengthy articles on the history of various record-companies should have been interesting, but in fact have consisted largely of details of financial and business arrangements with only an occasional nugget of the sort of information one hopes to find. I think that most readers of Hillandale, like myself, probably regard the recording and reproduction of sound and the manufacture of gramophone records as technical processes, compared with which 'business' is boring!

Your sincerely, D.E.Haines.

Didcot, Oxon. May 14th 1986

Dear Mr. Proudfoot,

I wonder if you or any of the readers of Hillandale News could help to answer the following questions.

I have been able to find some information on electrical recording, but hardly any on acoustic techniques. The information I would like to have is as follows:

#### 1: ACOUSTIC RECORDING

(a) Was the arm of the recording machine moved from the outer edge of the wax disc towards the centre by a linear screw feed, or did the wax disc and the disc drive unit move under the recording diaphragm. Also, how was the groove depth maintained?

(b) How many recording horns were used for the making of acoustic records? Was it one for the orchestra of piano, and one for the singer, or other artist - or did one horn record everything?

(c) I have found, generally speaking, that the orchestral accompaniments to vocal records on Columbia acoustic recordings are better than those on HMV; there is an attempt to create more of a genuine orchestral sound. This, to me, is most evident on Columbia recordings from circa 1920 to 1925. Does anyone else observe this, or am I deluding myself?

#### 2: GENERAL COMMENTS

(a) Were run-off grooves and locked grooves put on when the recording had just finished, or at a later date? Also, when did HMV first use the eccentric locked groove, and how was this put on earlier recordings?

(b) I have an HMV green label record 054204 (Caruso/Scotti/Farrer/Viafora) which has a raised run-off groove - can anyone explain this? I would also like to know



if there are any club members in the Didcot/Oxford area with whom I might be able to make contact.

Yours sincerely, J.Robert Dever

Huntington Beach, CA 92646, U.S.A. July 14th 1986

Dear Christopher,

The record described in the letter from Jim Friend (Hillandale June 1986) is a dual track record issued in 1931. There are two grooves starting at the outside of the record and running parallel with each other.

Several multi-track records have been made in England as well as in the U.S. Perhaps the first one was an English Berliner, made in 1900, called a 'Puzzle Plate'. There were three tracks on this one: Burt Shepherd singing "The Way to Kiss a Girl", a piano solo by Fred Gaisberg, and (as I recall), a whistling solo.

Probably the most famous multi-track record is the one recorded by the Gramophone Company in 1911, entitled "The Conundrum" (HMV 09255, Victor 35229). It was described in the U.S. Victor catalogue as:

The Conundrum (What Will I Play Next?):  
Puzzle Record (Four short selections,  
vocal and instrumental, any one of which  
the needle may decide to play.)

One can put the needle down at the beginning of the record and hear one of the following: a ragtime song by an orchestra, "Because" by Thorpe Bates, "I Want to Sing in Opera" by Wilki Bard, or "Ho! Jolly Jenkin!" by Harry Dearth. It remained in the Victor catalogue until 1925, when it was discontinued because, like so many other acoustic records, it was made obsolete by the new electric recording process.

Jim Friend asked why this type of record was made. I suppose they were simply amusing novelties. A horse race record was issued in the U.S. with several tracks. One would not know which of the four horses had won until the end of the race.

Sincerely, Quentin Riggs

Holyhead, Anglesey July 21st 1986

Dear Sir,

Regarding Mr. Cunningham's cry for help in the June issue, the answer appears in "Lew Stone's Career in Music", by Kenneth Todd. (This information was provided by Mr. Glyn Owen, a friend of mine, and a collector of dance and jazz records). In 1933, the News Chronicle organized a competition to see whether the British public preferred English or American dance music: two records were issued, one of Jack Hylton and his band and Lew Stone and his Monseigneur Band with Al Bowlly, the other of Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians with Bing Crosby and Wayne

King and his orchestra. The first record was Decca F3459, the second Brunswick 1456. £1,500 in prizes was on offer, the competition being to guess the sales figures of each of the records in March 1933. In the event, the Decca of Hylton and Stone sold 27,780, while the Brunswick could muster only 19,758.

Yours faithfully, O. Fassiola

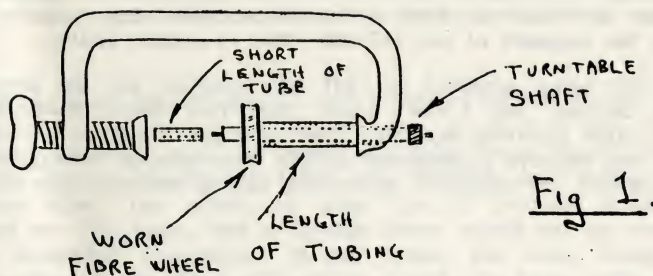
## An Epic Restoration

As Epic gramophones are rather thin on the ground, I had better describe the machine before giving an account of its restoration. Epics were made at the end of the 1920s by The Self Winding Gramophone Co. of 30 St. Ann Street, Manchester, using a system patented by Frank Norton. The 'self' was still yourself, but the novelty of the machine was that you wound the motor when you raised the lid of the floor-standing cabinet machine. In just over 90 degrees of movement of the lid, a steel tape which was wound round the mainspring shaft was pulled by a long lever coupled by a strut to the lid, and this action rapidly wound the motor. The mainspring was of light gauge and stored just enough energy to play a 10-inch record. Of necessity the motor had to be designed for low friction running and to this end the mainspring barrel runs on ball bearings, and the simple, efficient motor design uses bought-out components supplied by Collaro and Meccano among others. It runs silently and smoothly with a very low winding torque requirement. When the machine was being played, the lid was closed and a controlled amount of slack was introduced into the winding tape. This slack was taken up via a brake system by the slowly revolving mainspring drum, and when it was all taken up the motor stopped. With luck, this happens after the record has finished playing. If you forget to close the lid while playing a record, the machine remembers for you, and the lid closes with a slam, just after it passes through the vertical position. This is not the intended method of playing the Epic, however.

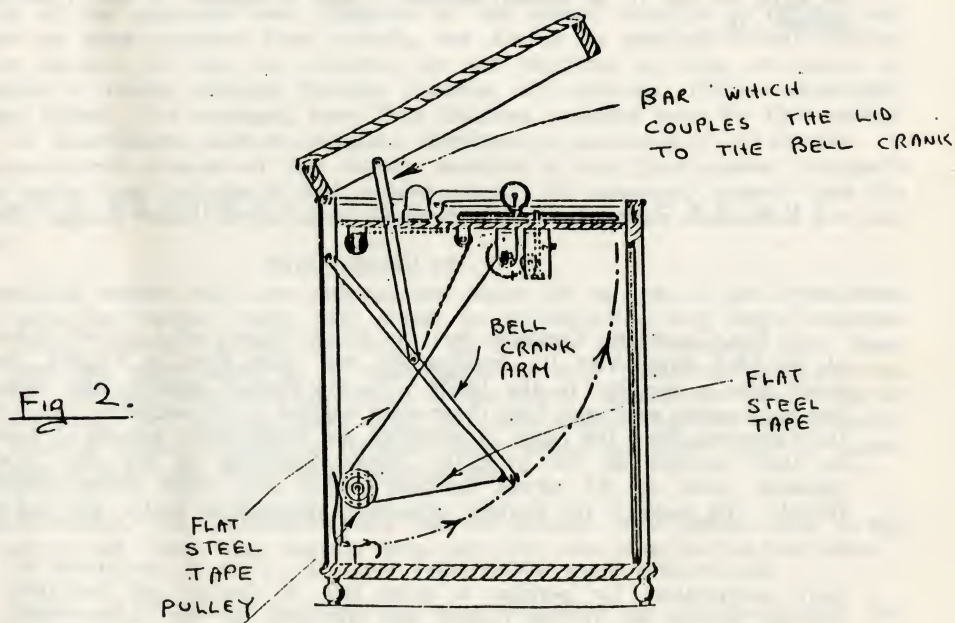
The faults on the machine when I acquired it were a stripped fibre wheel in the motor, an apparently broken mainspring (this turned out to be the centre detached from the arbor, which was fortunate as the makers stated that the spring was special and could only be obtained from them), corroded springs and broken cords in the lid counterbalance system and a missing steel winding tape. The lid counter-balance is important as all the effort used in raising the lid should go into winding the motor.

Restoration began by dealing with the fibre wheel. This had to be pressed off the turntable shaft and a replacement fitted. It was a Collaro part, and so not hard to find as this was a popular make of motor in the early thirties. The damaged wheel was pressed off the shaft using a G clamp with a hole drilled in the anvil, and two small lengths of tubing, as in the sketch on the next page. Replacement was largely a matter of reversing the process, note being taken of the original position of the wheel on the shaft.





The counterbalance problem was rectified with new springs and nylon cord, and oil on the long-dry pulley spindles. The winding tape replacement was courtesy of a 6-foot steel measuring tape from Woolworths, a bit of heat treatment and re-shaping of each end, erasing of the marking and hey presto, the machine was back in service.



A problem for the designer must have been how to fit an internal horn into the cabinet while leaving space for the winding arm ('bell crank arm' in Fig 2). The solution was ingenious, if rather expensive in production. Two horns were fitted side-by-side, fed by a double outlet manifold, which carries the ball-bearing mounted tone-arm. A space was left between the horns, and through the space swung the winding arm, pulling the steel tape. Ingenious, with acoustic stereo as a side effect!

I don't know how long the Self Winding Gramophone Co. was in business. Epics were competing with machines like the HMV 157 (which in appearance they resembled), and for all their mechanical innovation, their reproduction was not, of course, up to to the standard of the 163 and other re-entrant HMVs.

They were still being produced in 1931 (my example has the pencilled date 23.9.31 inside the cabinet), but I can't think that they lasted much longer, and I know of only one other surviving example. One must give credit to the imaginative mechanical design, but electric gramophone motors were already coming into general use, and the development of clockwork motors for talking machines was becoming an academic exercise.

Harry Evans

It would be interesting to know what the Epic cost when new. Most cabinet gramophones of the period ranged from £5 to £15, except for HMV, which were much better made and cost far more. Even the smallest of the Re-entrants, the 163, cost £30 in 1928, and the 157 was £22. Most Columbia cabinets were under £20, and I would think the Epic would have had to be no more than £10 or £12 to have any chance of selling.

Fig. 2 shows the arm which pulls the steel tape as a 'bell crank'; judging by the diagram, this appears to me to be a misnomer, since it is merely a straight lever pivoted at one end, whereas a bell crank, as I understand it, has two arms at right angles to each other, and is pivoted at the angle, so that it can transmit movement through 90 degrees. Or have I misinterpreted the diagram? - Ed.

## THE RECORDS OF THE CACOPHONE COMPANY

by George Taylor

The Cacophone Company was the British branch of a record-producing concern of pre-1914 days, with its headquarters and main plant in Estonia, then a Baltic state, now a republic in the USSR. To the English speaker, the name Cacophone had unfortunate overtones (and those were unusual in the acoustic era!). Presumably, the Estonians chose the name to advertise the considerable volume of sound produced by their records on the primitive talking machines of the day. Certainly, the Estonian name of the parent company would have been incomprehensible to the British; the name of the German subsidiary, Hissundkaki GmbH, was bad enough.

The records were double-sided from the start of operations in 1901. They were centre-start (or perhaps a little left of centre) and unilateral cut. Both nominal 10-inch and 12-inch records were produced, but the 12-inch were actually 12½ and the 10-inch 10½ inch, thus ensuring that they could not be inserted into competitors' envelopes.

This early production of double-sided records was not without problems, however. The first 12-inch records were pressed using 12-inch stampers on one side and 10-inch stampers on the other; presumably the stresses set up in the double



stamping of the early record composition did not allow 12-inch stampers to be used on both sides, and indeed, there were cases of spontaneous cracking of discs, nonetheless. These early 12-inch discs are easily recognised, and date from 1905 or earlier.

Results with 10-inch and 12-inch stampers on the 12-inch discs were so encouraging, in fact, that the same philosophy was adopted for the 10-inch records. There was a slight difficulty with the record not being large enough for the 12-inch matrix, but in the export market at least, the problem was trivial - after all, the disc was centre start, the music, at least that of Estonian origin, was of an unusual flavour to say the least, and a foreign buyer would not be aware that the rendition had been somewhat truncated. In any event, the label being Estonian, and hence undecipherable in the West, the buyer would not know what to expect, except in rather general terms.

All the early discs, at least up to 1907, had labels on one side only, presumably another problem not easily solved by these pioneers of double-sided disc production. The label gave details of the selections on both sides of the record, and the listener was thus able to assign the title of his choice to his favourite side of the record.

Most of the matrices were produced by the parent company in Estonia, but some matrices were acquired from outside, not always by methods strictly ethical in business circles. It was not unknown for the matrices of other companies to be impounded in transit through Estonian customs, the customs officials presumably having been bribed. For example, when Fred Gaisberg returned from his 1904 recording tour of Uzbekistan, several matrices disappeared mysteriously in Estonia. It is well known that several of the matrix numbers in the Gramophone Company's lists have never been correlated with record takes; for example, several from the March 1904 session when Melba first recorded have never been accounted for (see appendix).

Percipient readers will have realised that since the records of the Gramophone Company were not centre start, they would be incompatible with the Cacophone product. Such, however, is not the case. It appears that stampers from these 'foreign' matrices were made by a complicated reverse photo-engraving process, so that the resulting records were indeed centre-start. The music would play in reverse, of course. An Estonian buyer would no doubt assume that this was a peculiarity of Western Music, whereas a Western buyer would not know what to expect anyway, since he could not read the Cacophone label.

Unfortunately, the Cacophone plant and its product were swept away in the conflagration of the Great War, and the discs are very rare, even on the Continent.

APPENDIX: The saga of the missing Melba matrices is an interesting one. It is well known that the first recording sessions undertaken by Melba were at her pad in Great Cumberland Place, the equipment and blank waxes having to be moved in there. A special Melba matrix series was used for the March sessions, Melba 1 to 28 (or perhaps 29 or 30). However, there is no information in the G & T files on the titles recorded on Melbas 3,4,5,8,13,17 (and 29 and 30). Happily, a collector has recently found some early Cacophone discs with selections which may represent at least some of the missing Melbas. It appears that the recording team either lost the matrices in the taxi back to the studio, or left them lying around in Melba's drawing room, presumably to be acquired by a lackey in the hire of the Estonian company. This, of course, is the origin of the 'lost wax' process for

making metal mothers.

Unfortunately, the missing Melba matrices, which were 12 inch, were used on 10-inch Caco-phone records, so that there is a problem in restoring the missing inch or two of the groove. A project is in hand in America to restore the missing music by computer - a trivial problem compared with that of transforming 1902 Milan Carusos to full CD stereo sound.

George Taylor, 2 May 1986

(Not, be it noted, April 1st - Ed.)

## Reviews

### ELGAR'S INTERPRETERS ON RECORD:

A Discography by John Knowles

(Thames Publishing, £8.50)

This is the second edition of a work which first appeared in 1977, and it is food for thought that so much of Elgar's music had been committed to record since then to justify the new edition. That great interpreter of Elgar, Sir Adrian Boult, is no longer with us in the flesh, but other conductors have come forward in this field in recent years, notably Vernon Handley with his highly recommended versions of the two symphonies, the violin concerto and other orchestral works on the Classics for Pleasure and Eminence l.p. labels. Good, too, to have valued the interpretations of conductors who came to Elgar from the outside, so to speak, such as Daniel Barenboim, Bernard Haitink and Sir Georg Solti.

Although the book is primarily addressed to Elgar students and enthusiasts rather than the main body of record collectors, those (such as this reviewer) who belong in both camps will be pleased with the well-detailed and generously dated discography of the composer's works, which lists all types of discs and tapes, but they will look in vain for matrix numbers. Mr. Knowles takes us through the decades since the first recording of an Elgar piece, "Salut d'Amour", issued in 1901, which, incidentally, is illustrated as G.C.7941 and described as a Zonophone in the text. Noteworthy recordings of each period are selected for comment, and the comprehensive listing extends to the end of 1984 with the latest l.p. records, cassette tapes and compact discs.

The book serves to remind us that Elgar took enthusiastically to the gramophone at an early stage in its development, and we all owe a debt of gratitude to the Gramophone Company for having made it possible to record such a large percentage of his output, much of which he re-recorded by the electrical process during the last seven years of his life. EMI have rendered a valuable service to music in preserving these performances on microgroove and tape for the present



ad the future, and the work of smaller companies and the Elgar Society must not go unremarked. It is strange, however, that this rich recorded legacy lacks any version conducted by Elgar of one of his finest and best-known works, the Introduction and Allegro for Strings.

The discography comes with plenty of clear and interesting illustrations, which are none the less welcome for being largely reproductions of publicity material from the record companies.

One finds the occasional typographical error, and in the prefix index the auto-coupled Decca "AX" series 12-inch gold label records are shown as ten-inchers, whereas the Parlophone "R" series records are described as twelves. It is the reviewer's duty to mention these small details.

The book has 133 pages in horizontal A4 format between soft covers. On the front Sir Edward is shown listening to a Hayes-built radio set with separate loudspeaker, and on the back he is about to play a "DB" (or perhaps a red-label "D") on a Model 163. The same studio standard lamp shines down on both scenes.

A welcome book, the result of scholarly research, but first and foremost one for Elgarians, for whom this is a most desirable document.

K.W.L.

#### THE VINTAGE MILITARY BAND

(No. 1 of the Band International Series of long playing records produced by the International Military Music Society)

Nos. 2 and 3 of this series were reviewed in Hillandale 145 and 146. Number 1 is a compilation of recordings issued between fifty and sixty years ago, except for one item by the Royal Artillery and one by the Scots Guards Bands. These, although credited to "the 1930's", were issued between 1945 and 1949. They were recorded by, or for, Boosey & Hawkes.

Fifteen tracks have been recorded by nine different bands (the sleeve says eight), all of them by British regimental bands except for three items by some musicians of the Kneller Hall Military School of Music, and one by the B.B.C. Wireless Military Band.

The oldest recordings and the most interesting, historically, are the two Alford marches played by the band of the 2nd. Battalion, the Argyle & Sutherland Highlanders under its conductor/composer, Bandmaster F.J.Ricketts, otherwise Kenneth J. Alford.

The front of the record sleeve depicts this band and its conductor outside a building in their Sterling Castle Barracks which has been reproduced from a very rare photograph.

The back of the sleeve details the titles, composers, names of the bands and conductors for each item recorded along with the matrix number and take,

except for the Band of the Life Guards, where only the record number is given. The year of issue is also given. There are no recording dates, nor are originating labels and their catalogue numbers given, or the "C" or "W" indicating Blumlein or Western Electric process on Columbia and Regal. The recordings have been transferred by Lloyd Stickells, from Boosey & Hawkes, Broadcast Super Twelve, Columbia, HMV, Regal and Zonophone records.

The lower half of the sleeve covers the "why" and "how" of this l.p.'s production, and gives information on the bands, the conductors, the pieces and their composers, all most interesting. This section, for the first time as far as I am aware, reveals that the composer, W.V.Richards, credited with the Namur March, was in fact Bandmaster F.J.Ricketts (K.J.Alford).

Taking into account the various electrical recording methods used in the originals, a remarkably high standard of reproduction has been achieved in the transfer to l.p. As is to be expected from the clutch of conductors on display, the musicianship of the players in the bands is of the best.

Titles are as follows:

#### Side A

Fanfare for Heroes (Sir Arthur Bliss)  
The Jolly Robbers, Overture (von Suppe)  
Belphegor March (Brepasant)  
Grenadiers Waltz (Waldteufel)  
Entry of the Boyars, March (Halvorsen)  
Gallantry - Duo d'Amour (Ketelbey)  
The Leek, selection (Myddleton)

Kneller Hall Musicians/H.E.Adkins  
B.B.C.Military Band/B.W.O'Donnell  
Grenadier Guards Band/G.Miller  
Grenadier Guards Band/G.Miller  
Coldstream Guards Band/R.G.Evans  
Royal Horse Guards (The Blues)/W.J.Dunn  
Royal Artillery Band/D.Geary

#### Side B

Fanfare for a Ceremony (Sir Walford Davies)  
Knights of the King, Grand Processional (Ketelbey)  
New Colonial March (R.B.Hall)  
Swift and Bold, March (J.W.Mansfield)  
Colonel Bogey, March (K.J.Alford)  
The Great Little Army, March (Alford)  
Namur March (W.V.Richards)  
The Battle of Waterloo (A.Eckersberg)

Kneller Hall Musicians/H.E.Adkins  
Royal Horse Guards (The Blues)/J.W.Dunn  
The Life Guards Band/W.J.Gibson  
Coldstream Guards Band/R.G.Evans  
2nd Batt'n, Argyle & Sutherland Highlanders  
" " " " /F.J.Ricketts  
Scots Guards Band/S.Rhodes  
Kneller Hall Band (175 performers)/Adkins

The record, number IMMS 103, is available from V.Elstow, the International Military Music Society, [REDACTED]

Price £5.95 Post Paid.

Frank Andrews



The illustration on Page 77 shows the first arrival of the Intermediate Monarch Gramophone in 1908 (See overleaf for further details. A companion advertisement, of similar date, appears on Page 80, for the smaller Victor Monarch, really the old 'New Victor' with a 10" turntable instead of an 8" one.



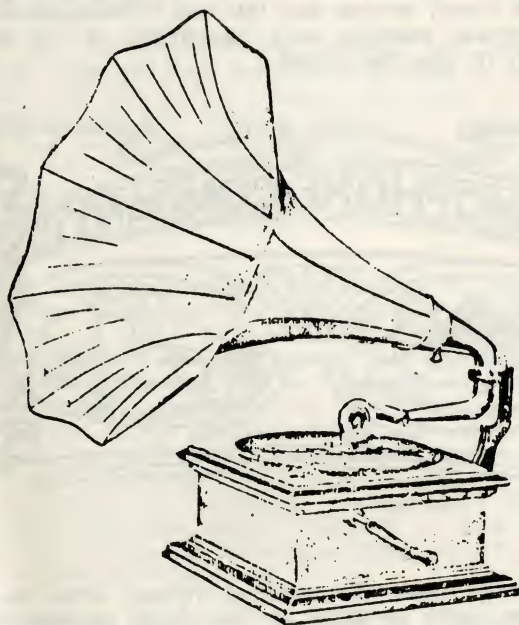
# The "Intermediate Monarch" Gramophone.

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A BEAUTIFUL NEW MODEL, READY SEPTEMBER 1st, 1908.

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Price



£4 10 0

## — SPECIFICATION —

CABINET	-	-	-	Quartered Oak, Fine Finish.
MOTOR	-	-	-	Special Worm Gear.
TURNTABLE	-	-	-	10 in., will play any size of Record.
TAPER ARM	-	-	-	Medium.
HORN	-	-	-	Morning Glory, in Colours.
SOUND BOX	-	-	-	Exhibition.

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The "Intermediate Monarch" meets the demand for a Genuine Gramophone at a low price. It is a most reliable Single Spring Instrument, bearing the Gramophone Company's trade mark of excellence.

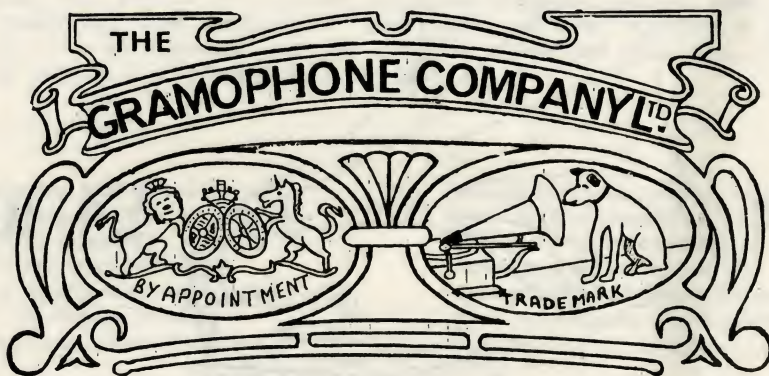
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*Manufactured by —*

## The Gramophone Company, Ltd.

# Which Monarch?

These notes were prompted by an enquiry from the Hon. Treasurer concerning the identity of a gramophone that had come his way. The transfer (reproduced in the sketch below) indicated clearly enough that this was a Gramophone Company machine and a number of technical features were identifiably of the Monarch family, but where (and when) did it fit into the range?



The tone-arm was smaller than the standard version fitted to Junior and Senior Monarchs alike, but not quite as small as that found on the New Victor, and the case, devoid of any carving or corner pilasters, was of a pale-coloured wood which was certainly not the usual oak.

I was able to identify the machine as an early Intermediate Monarch, and a copy of an advertisement for it appears on the next page. The 'Intermediate' title refers to its position between the Victor and Baby Monarchs; the Victor Monarch, as the next illustration shows, was actually the model previously known as the 'New Victor'. The only difference, and the only feature justifying the slogan 'greatly improved', was the ten-inch turntable, replacing the 8-inch turntable of the New Victor. No doubt supplies of the 8-inch turntable had run out, and it was cheaper to fit remaining stocks of the New Victor with a standard turntable, common to other models. All Victor Monarchs I have seen have had the hole for the speed screw moved 1 inch further out to allow for the extra inch of radius, the old hole sometimes being left, sometimes plugged.

The New Victor/Victor Monarch has an oak case; the case of the first Intermediate Monarchs was made, like that of the Pigmy Grand, of basswood, otherwise known as American Whitewood. This is a very smooth timber with no discernable grain pattern. The case style of the Intermediate Monarch, usually executed in Basswood, had been around for two or three years, apparently as an alternative form of New



Victor. The strange exclusion of either version from G & T catalogues renders correct identification difficult, however. Matters have not been helped by the fact that the New Victor was shown in the 1908 New Zealand catalogue as a 'Baby Monarch'; because a reprint of this catalogue was included in this Society's list for many years, and was for many collectors the only source of information on Gramophone Company products of the period, there is a natural tendency to think of this model as the Baby Monarch.

Those readers who are not already totally confused may like to study the two pictures on the inside front and back covers. These show an Intermediate Monarch - but it has an oak case with corner pilasters, and is the more familiar form of what is actually one of the most common of all HMV-horn gramophones. It is an example dating from late 1910 or early 1911, a time when the whole Monarch range was revamped, and, for short time only, acquired little gold transfers on the side giving the model name. (As the names were replaced in the catalogue by numbers almost at the same time, the labels were presumably stopped as soon as stocks were used up.)

What makes this particular example interesting in the present context is that, while it has the new style of case, it retains the mechanical features of the 1908 model. That is to say, it has a strange motor combining the brass bevel gears of the earliest side-wind motors with the type of bedplate found on the worm-drive motors of the late G & T period and later on most Monarchs; and, a flanged elbow (like all other Monarchs) and a boss at the fat end of the tone-arm which is unique to this model. This boss, coved on its underside and visible in the photographs just below the ring on the back-bracket which supports both tone-arm and elbow, disappeared in 1911 when the flanged elbow was also replaced by the cheaper, and inferior, 'plug' type familiar on continental gramophones. (The larger Monarchs retained the flange for some time longer). Probably at about the same time, the motor was replaced by the standard worm-drive design with tilting governor already in use in, for example, the Victor Monarch.

In my experience, the vast majority of Intermediate Monarchs which survive are from the later period, with plug elbows, and one wonders why a size that became so popular apparently failed to catch on in the 1908-10 seasons. Most of these later ones were not, of course, called Intermediate Monarchs; they were Model 2 or, from 1923, Model 20. Nor were they Intermediate, for the Victor Monarch had probably disappeared altogether by 1910, and the only model below the Intermediate/2 was the Model 1, which was hornless.

Another topic raised by this enquiry is that of Nipper transfers on Gramophones. The New Victor (in either case style) was probably the only model in the G & T period (which ended in November 1907) to carry a picture of Nipper. He appeared as part of a splendid red banner transfer whose most prominent feature was the word 'Gramophone': it was still a proprietary term. The attractive, multi-coloured transfer shown in Mike's sketch was used in 1909, and his machine can therefore be dated to that year. I have seen this transfer on Pigmy Grands, Junior Monarchs and, I think, on larger Monarchs. Nipper on a dark red plinth, as seen on the 1910 Intermediate Monarch illustrated on our inside covers, belongs to 1910-11; by late 1911, cabinet models had him in an elaborate scrolling frame, while on lesser models, by the same time or not very long after, the plinth lost its clearly defined edges and was vignettised.

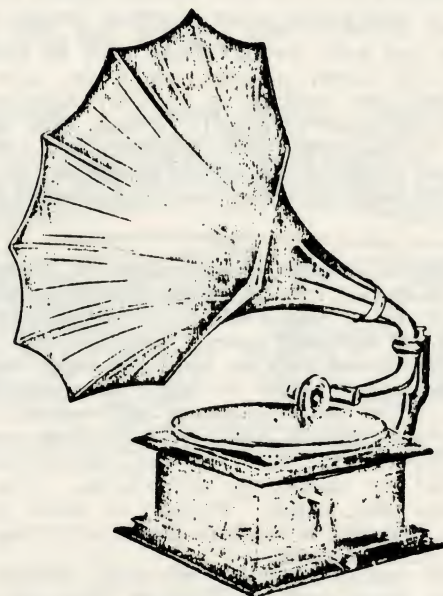
Christopher Proudfoot

# The Victor Monarch Gramophone.

GREATLY IMPROVED ! !

- - - READY NOW - - -

Price



£3 10 0

## — SPECIFICATION —

CABINET	-	-	-	Quartered Oak, Excellent Finish.
MOTOR	-	-	-	Special Worm Gear.
TURNTABLE	-	-	-	10 in., will play 10 in. or 12 in. Records.
TAPER ARM	-	-	-	Small.
SOUND BOX	-	-	-	Exhibition (latest pattern).
HORN	-	-	-	Morning Glory pattern, in colours.

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A Reliable and Capable Instrument. Sure to give satisfaction.

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*Manufactured by* \_\_\_\_\_

# The Gramophone Company, Ltd.



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# Obituary

## SIR PETER PEAR'S

On the third of April this year one of the most prominent figures in British musical life and arguably the finest English tenor of our century died. I refer to Sir Peter Pears who, according to my notes, was born in Farnham on June 22nd 1910. Unfortunately, as England boasts at least five places called Farnham, I am unaware of the exact geographical location. After completing studies at the Royal College of Music in London he toured the United States as a member of the New English Singers. A year later (in 1938) he partnered Benjamin Britten in a recital series.

The partnership of Pears and Britten proved to be lifelong with virtually all the leading roles in Ben's operas being written for and sung by Peter. In 1948 they founded the Aldeburgh Festival. One wonders if the direction of that festival will change now that Sir Peter is gone, as he represented the last member of the trio (along with Ben and Imogen Holst) continuously associated with the event since its inception.

In 1941 he made his first recording with Britten (the Music of Bali) in New York and their long recording career with Decca commenced shortly after that time with some French folk songs. It is often wrongly assumed that Pears devoted his recording sessions almost entirely to the works of Britten. Of course a vast wealth of music by that composer was committed to posterity by his friend. In this category, the beautiful Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings springs immediately to mind (cut for Decca in 1954). Even those who do not readily warm to Britten's idiom could not fail to appreciate the vocal artistry in evidence here. Pears' exceptional command of German brought him remarkable acclaim from German audiences, notably for his performances of Bach and Schubert. He became Sir Peter Pears in 1978 - a worthy recognition for a vocalist who excelled in all fields; from Purcell to Stravinsky and beyond. Aside from these qualities, I will always remember him as a thoroughly agreeable and pleasant man whom I was fortunate enough to know towards the end of his life.

John Cavanagh

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## TWISTED HORNS

In a recent article in Hillandale (February 1986, page 323), the question arose as to why certain petalled horns have a slight twist in them.

Two possible causes of this twist come to mind. The first is that slight errors of squareness between a line drawn from the ends of the wired edge (rim) and one drawn down the true centre line of each panel could cause the petal to lie at a very slight helix even before seaming up.

This error could be created in the template and overcome by reversing the template during marking out for each consecutive panel, provided the horn has an even number of petals, but even if it doesn't, one uneven petal would not cause too much twist.

The second cause is probably most likely, as the first error seems to me to be too simple to be allowed by producers who were manufacturing horns in the obvious quantities they were. The other cause is produced during the seaming process, with the petals already pulled into the 'exponential' curve. Before the locking rollers are introduced to the seam, the petals lie at different curves, one on the outside of the seam and the other on the inside. If the locking rolls do not quite equally correct this, then a slight twisting occurs. Although this is noticeable to the viewer, these horns are perfectly strong and serviceable and I can understand manufacturers letting them through the inspection line for sale.

I have manufactured a few of this type of horn in brass (I showed one of them at last year's Phonofair, fitted to a Pathephone), and would be pleased to give an article on their manufacture if you are interested. (Yes Please - Ed.)

I have also manufactured a number of steel elbows, cutting them from two pieces of steel - the flare and the stem, and welding them on the bend before dressing and polishing. I read with great interest the alternative methods given by Mike Field last April.

L. Miles Mallinson.

Minster on sea, Kent

Dear Christopher,

Perhaps someone can explain what appears to me to be an anomaly concerning two Regal records. I have long had a rather rough copy of G6354, 'Nellie Dean', with 'Lady Love' on the back, both sung by the Regal Male Quartette. It has the old maroon-purple label with orb-and-sceptre motif, and both recordings are acoustic.

I recently acquired a much later copy, with the red Regal Zonophone label, which I understood dated from the Second World War period. The recordings appear to be identical with the older record, and the matrix numbers are the same, apart from type-style and an added dash and single digit, presumably to indicate the number of the stamper. Nellie Dean is matrix number 3174 (3174 - 1 on the newer copy) and Lady Love is 4169 (4169 - 2). The Lady Love side in the later pressing has a scrolled in run-out groove.

Why should two obviously very obsolete recordings by "session artists" have been still available long after the introduction of electrical recording? Frank Andrews has pointed out (in "Columbia 10" inch Records 1904-30") that many acoustic sides from Regal's controlling Columbia group were re-made during the late 1920s. Were many also retained?

Yours sincerely, Colin Johnson.





